facilitating investment in the country by international companies, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and other foreign investments and to ensure expeditious clearance of the proposals for foreign investment.

Market share of sail in crude steel production

1010. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMA CHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the market share of SAIL out of the total crude steel production in the country; and

(b) the steps taken to modernise Steel Authority of India Limited to get better improved production with cost reduction?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Out of a total production of 21.942 million tonne of Crude Steel in the country during the year 1995-96, SAIL including IISCO has produced 10.637 million tonne.

(b) SAIL has undertaken modernisation of its three existing integrated steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro with the objectives of Technological Upgradation, attaining higher productivity, economy in cost of production, energy conservation, improvements of yield and reduction of environmental pollution. The steps to modernise inter-alia involve phasing out of Open Hearth Furnaces, introduction of latest BOF technology, adoption of continuous casting in place of ingot route, improvement in productivity by restoration of health of plants and equipment and optimum utilisation of capacity, etc.

Workshop on the role of wholesale markets for Urban Food Distribution System in Asia

1011. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some four day workshop on "the role of wholesale markets for urban food distribution system in Asia" was organised at New Delhi in recent past;

(b) if so, details thereof with the background;

(c) whether some suggestions for efficient marketing promotion of agricultural produce in Asia and Pacific were given in the workshop;

(d) whether some decisions to channelise the agricultural surpluses were also taken in the workshop; and

(e) if so, steps proposed to be taken to implement the suggestions as well as decisions?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. A workshop was organised at Surajkund near Delhi.

(b) The Association of Food Marketing Agencies in Asia and the Pacific (AFMA), an institution sponsored by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), approached Food Corporation of India for holding the Workshop in India with a view to share the experiences in 13 AFMA countries on the role of wholesale markets for urban food distribution system. The Workshop consisted of presentation of case study papers, technical sessions and field trips for inter-action of experiences in the member countries.

(c) to (e) The Workshop made certain general recommendations.

Excavation of diamond mines in Madhya Pradesh

1012. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that global tenders had been floated by Government of Madhya Pradesh for excavating diamond from Deobhog and other mines in Raipur district;

(b) if so, the details of the applicants thereto and modus operandi of short listing the applications;

(c) whether it is a fact that NMDC and MMTC have not been included in the last three concerns selected for final allotment; and